



S S P X

St. Ignatius Retreat House

Number 1 March - April 2016 ❖

Manresa

The treasure that we possess here at the St. Ignatius Retreat House can be understood and appreciated more deeply by examining the ways that God has worked in and through the lives of three men. The first is of course St. Ignatius himself, whose conversion exemplifies the soul's journey to spiritual manhood. Born in 1491 at the family castle of Loyola, he and many of his relatives were soldiers for the kings of Castile. He longed for the excitement and fame of military exploits and so began service at the age of sixteen in the court of his relative Don Juan Velasquez. Ignatius continued the practice of his faith, but also indulged in life at court. After receiving a leg wound in battle he underwent a profound conversion while recuperating at Loyola. Having decided on the permanent reform of his rather worldly life, he set about the task with his characteristic energy and resolved to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. His first steps led him to Monserrat, a famous sanctuary of our Lady in Catalonia. He gave his possessions away and, clothed with a pilgrim's garment, made a general confession and spent the night at the altar of our Lady. Proceeding on his pilgrimage, he stopped at the small town of Manresa where he would eventually spend ten months in the years 1522-23. The fruits of this prayer and penance are now known as St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises.

Continued on p. 3

A Letter from Fr. Violette



Dear Retreatants,

First I want to thank you for your continued support of St. Ignatius Retreat House. Your support is invaluable and most appreciated. Without you we could not continue. For Archbishop Lefebvre, the work of preaching the Spiritual Exercises was one of the main apostolates of our Society. The Spiritual Exercises are one of the greatest graces and means of apostolate given to our Society by God, through Father Ludovic-Marie Barrielle (d. 1983), who brought them to us and taught us the method of preaching them.

The year 2015 was a very good year for the Retreat House. The Ignatian Retreats were preached to 130 men and 93 women a total of 223 retreatants. We have also hosted the SSPX Principals' Meeting in June and held days of recollection for women as well as for high school boys and girls. We have hosted 14 of the SSPX Brothers for their annual retreat in September. Every year we preach the Spiritual Exercises to the senior classes of Notre Dame de La Salette Boys Academy as well as the senior classes both boys and girls of Blessed Virgin Mother of God (BVM) Academy in Syracuse, NY. So you can see, your generosity is not wasted but is put to good use.

Many improvements were done on the Retreat House itself, besides the installation of the new windows in the fall of 2014, we also needed to install a new boiler system during the summer. The new windows and the new boiler make our heating more efficient and more cost effective. There is still much to be done. One of the next big projects will be the septic system.

How can you continue to support us? First and most important come follow a retreat. Bombarded as we are today by the spirit of independence, rebellion and disobedience we need to put order in our lives. The diabolical disorientation is everywhere. We need to be reminded of our constant and absolute dependence on almighty God and of the only means he has given us for salvation: his holy Catholic Church outside of which there is no salvation.

A second means of support is to sponsor a retreatant. It is a way to show your gratitude for the graces you have received from the Spiritual Exercises and help other to profit from them also. The fee is now \$300.00

A third way is through regular monthly donations, even if it is just \$10.00 a month. These donations help us not only continue preaching the Spiritual Exercises but also help us continue the upkeep of such a big house as ours which is always in need of work. So please include in your monthly budget a donation even of a few dollars for the retreat house.

A fourth way is to remember us in your testament. That way you will have a right to the continued prayers of our community into eternity.

Be assured of our grateful prayers for you and your families. May God reward your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Jean Violette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Fr. Jean Violette



Continued from p. 1

This divinely inspired tool for spiritual growth bore fruit in conversions, re-conversions and vocations throughout the world for hundreds of years and was thus hated and opposed especially in France in the early 20th century. At that time the liberal movement towards communism and socialism sought to stamp out the work of St. Ignatius and with it one of its great apostles. Fr. Ludovic-Marie Barrielle was ordained as a diocesan priest in France in 1924. While doing the Spiritual Exercises with a Spanish priest, Fr. Vallet, Fr. Barrielle was hit over the head with his second vocation. He abandoned his beloved parish and entered as a novice into Fr. Vallet's new little Congregation for the purpose of giving the Spiritual Exercises. In these Exercises of St. Ignatius, he discovered what was missing from his parish work, the heaven-sent instrument to pull modern men away from worldly distractions and to set them, by several days' serious prayer and penance, firmly on the road to saving their souls.

Fr. Barrielle threw himself energetically into preaching the exercises and saw much fruit in the post-war years. But then came the Second Vatican Council. The modernists who took over the Church could not tolerate the Faith being so strongly conveyed by the traditional method of Ignatius, so Fr. Vallet's little Congregation came under severe pressure to update or water down the Exercises. Since Fr. Barrielle was unwilling to do so, he was relegated to a distant house in the north of France. It seemed that all was lost, but at this providential moment came Fr. Barrielle's third vocation.



Fr. Ludovic-Marie Barrielle

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre had founded the Priestly Society of St. Pius X in 1970 to meet the needs of a group of seminarians who wanted to escape from the errors flooding in after the Council. He had opened a house for them in the now famous location of Ecône with several young priests to help him, but he was lacking an older and more experienced priest for their spiritual direction. He called for Fr. Barrielle's assistance and was not disappointed. From 1971 to 1983, Fr. Barrielle spent an astonishing twelve years at Ecône, more fruitful than ever, faithful to St. Ignatius and now to the Society. A deeply spiritual man, he did a holy hour every day and is even said to have died returning from his customary holy hour. The Ignatian retreats he preached to the seminarians, as well as retreats preached to others with the seminarians' help, laid a solid foundation that is bearing fruit to this day. Thanks to Fr. Barrielle, these Ignatian Retreats are now a vital part of the apostolate of SSPX priests all over the world.

One notable fruit of this apostolate is seen in the life of Fr. Violette. While on a Holy Week retreat in Shawinigan, Quebec in 1978, he discovered his priestly vocation after only the first two of St. Ignatius' meditations. He entered the SSPX seminary at Ecône in 1978 and came under the direction of Fr. Barrielle. This master of the Spiritual Exercises preached Fr. Violette's five-day entrance retreat, a 10-day retreat in preparation for Pentecost, and then a 30-day retreat in 1982. Fr. Violette had the privilege of receiving his priestly formation under Fr. Barrielle's great personality. Warm-hearted, direct, intuitive, with a great faith and a great love of the Sacred Heart, of our Lady, and of St. Joseph, he poured himself out in his priesthood and into the souls of seminarians like Jean Violette in the last years of his life.

Having received the precious treasure of the Exercises at Ecône, Fr. Violette now passes on this inheritance to a new generation of faithful. He was fortunate to preach the entrance retreat at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in 1993 and has been greatly encouraged by the conversions and vocations that have been evident over the years. Fr. Violette has preached the exercises approximately 100 times since his ordination in 1984 and now shares his wealth of experience with retreatants at St. Ignatius Retreat House.

The reason so many people hesitate to go on retreat is that they are afraid of having that light shed on their soul and being obliged to correct something in themselves. It's a sad thing. So they live a life of superficiality, a life of distraction, a life of noise, to avoid coming face to face with themselves. The voice of God begins to speak the minute we are alone with our conscience. And there are souls who do not want to hear that voice because it is going to tell them something they might be doing wrong... They prefer to live in a state of distraction, in the constant commotion of the world.

The Spiritual Life,
Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre





Keeping the Spirit of the Retreat

Those who have made the Ignatian Retreats at Ridgefield have become members of the extended family of Ridgefield retreatants. This newsletter aims to be a tool to aid the retreatant family in keeping the spirit of the retreat during the rest of the year, and to foster an ever greater union of all members, in heart and soul: *cor unum et anima una*.

We all know the great value of the retreats we have made and the many graces received. In order for these graces to bear fruit in us, and for our retreats to be something more than a flash in the pan or an emotional high, it is important to keep the spirit of the retreat in some very concrete ways.

Fr. Violette gives the analogy of an athletic training camp: “Every sports team begins the year with training camp to get the players back in shape after the off season and learn or relearn the game plan. You are only a good player if you can execute the game plan. Few people persevere, because they do not put the game plan into execution.” On retreat, that is, we form a game plan for our spiritual life—specific to that season of our life—and it is important to put it into practice once we return to our daily lives in order for it to bear fruit.

“It is essential to keep the resolutions you made before God,” says Fr. Violette. “Write them down, look at them once a month. Persevere in your struggle against your dominant fault, the enslavement by which Satan

keeps you captive. Persevere in the study of our holy religion, in the fight against the modern errors, and work for the establishment of the Social Kingship of Christ.” The structured prayer life of the retreat is one of its highlights. It is important to continue a structured prayer life back at home. This consists of: morning and evening prayer, prayers before and after meals, the Rosary, and good spiritual reading. Keep custody of the senses, as well as a spirit of recollection in accord with your duties of state. Regular reception of the Sacraments is essential, specifically regular Confession and Holy Communion. Confession every two weeks will bear great fruit.

All of this helps us persevere until our next retreat. After all, the spiritual life has its seasons, so one retreat is not enough to remain spiritually strong; it needs to be renewed with a return retreat. “There is a reason why teams have training camp not just once, but every year,” Fr. Violette adds. The tempter tries new tactics, and we must be in good shape to act against them: to *agere contra*. The periodic repetition of the Exercises, as envisioned by St. Ignatius and required by the constitutions of his Society, helps us draw ever more benefit from this proven means of reform, which solidifies in souls a sound piety, leads them towards perfection, and takes them to the summit of the spiritual life (cf. Pope Pius XI, *Mens Nostra*, n. 16).

Behind the Scenes

The Staff of St. Ignatius Retreat House



Br. Louis de Montfort handles registrations and welcomes the retreatants



Br. Anthony—our dedicated sacristan



Br. Benedict proudly stands in front of our new boiler system



Mrs. Joanne Lynch has been housekeeper at the retreat house since 1992



Mrs. Jeanette Quigley—Chef extraordinaire!



Mr. Bob Searles at one of his many tasks since 2001



Book Review: The Soul of the Apostolate

Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard

Probably the biggest difficulty in lives of modern Catholics is balancing the need for action with the “interior life,” or the life of prayer. Too many people are caught up in the “cult of action” which pervades society at every level. And although the problem is not a new one, this imbalance between action and prayer is today more acute than ever.

It is because even those involved in religious or apostolic activities have a tendency to lose sight of God as their primary focus that Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard wrote *The Soul of the Apostolate*. This tome of spiritual advice was so well-respected that St. Pius X made it his bedside reading. If you want to know “what’s wrong with the world,” Dom Chautard not only diagnoses the problem, he provides a common-sense, practical and, therefore, spiritual remedy.

The Soul of the Apostolate confronts dangers that have long affected Catholics. In spite of all of the building projects and retreats and orphanages and hospitals and societies and sodalities sponsored by the Church, there was a pronounced imbalance caused by “an excessive exteriorization through good works.” If we measure success by these things, Dom Chautard warns, we will forget that the true measure of success is each of us living as a “monstrance of God.”

But what does this mean? It means that in their zeal to do things, Catholics can find themselves committing the “heresy of good works.” This happens when the Catholic apostle looks only “to his own personal activity and talents as a basis for apostolic success” and leaves God out of the picture. This book brings the focus back to where it belongs, to first principles, to the foundations of our being—prayer. The answer, then, lies in the apostle discovering (or rediscovering) the interior life, which invests the capital of sanctifying grace and only then puts it to work in the active life.

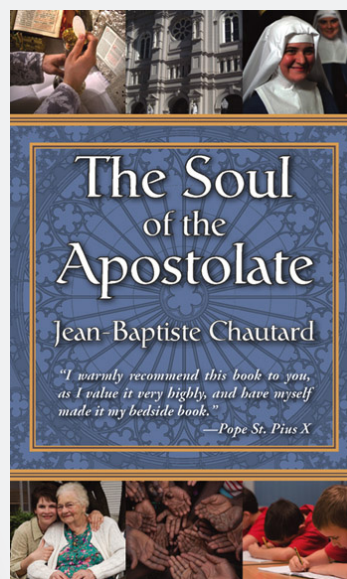
The interior life is not for the lazy, far from it. In fact, the lazy fear submitting to the interior life, as it requires the creation of good habits and a regular prayer life. It is difficult. “Who does not know this from experience? There are times when we might be inclined to prefer long hours in some exhausting occupation to half an hour of serious mental prayer, to an attentive hearing of Mass, or to the careful and intelligent recitation of the Breviary.” Nor is it selfish. We must have our own soul in good health if we wish to sanctify another.

Some of the most striking descriptions in the book are

words from the saints on the importance of the interior life. We read about all the great achievements of saints and fail to realize that before they set out to conquer for God, they put themselves in union with God. They prayed and fasted and led holy lives. The example of quiet, humble saints has won more souls for God than garrulous doers. The example of Archbishop Lefebvre almost seems tailor-made for this book. He considered the interior life so important to the success of his seminary in Ecône that he thought it more important than studying pastoral theology!

Dom Chautard shows us that, far from being too busy to set aside time for prayer, the supernatural life must be our first priority if we expect any of our actions to have a lasting influence in the world. There are indeed dangers in ignoring the interior life. Not everyone will hear and respond to the message of this book. What a pity. Many professional athletes spend time alone meditating prior to joining the battles of practice and games. It is amazing that we do not find time to do the same for a battle infinitely more important.

Scott Quinn



The Soul of the Apostolate
336pp.—Softcover—STK #8257—\$13.50
Available at www.angeluspress.org
PO Box 217, St. Marys, KS 66536 | (800) 966-7337



2016 Retreat Schedule

Mar 7-12	Men's Ignatian Retreat
Apr 18-23	Women's Ignatian Retreat
May 16-21	Men's Ignatian Retreat
June 6-11	Women's Ignatian Retreat
July 11-16	Men's Ignatian Retreat
Aug 8-13	Women's Ignatian Retreat
Aug 29-Sep 3	Men's Ignatian Retreat
Oct 10-15	Men's Ignatian Retreat
Nov 7-12	Women's Ignatian Retreat
Dec 5-10	Men's Ignatian Retreat

To register for a retreat call 203 431 0201
Or register online at sspxfordfield.com

What Retreatants are Saying:

Prior to coming on this retreat, I had not realized the extent to which my spiritual well-being had declined since my last retreat four years ago. Without knowing it, I had fallen into the errors of the post-Vatican era — I lost sight of the importance of prayer and sacrifice in my daily life. By the grace of God, I have now realigned myself with the true teachings Holy Mother Church and beg God for perseverance.

Michael, Ohio

I can't thank you enough for showing us how to use these spiritual weapons to combat the enemy of our souls. I am strengthened and more equipped than when I came. My intention is to use these means to grow more spiritually, fight against self-love and have more of a prayer life. Thank you to all those brothers and house members behind the scenes. God willing I'll be back next year.

Stephanie, New York

Will You Help Us?

You can't put a price tag on the Spiritual Exercises. Yet, there are costs involved in providing such spiritual weapons to Catholics in these perilous times — costs that are only partially covered by the retreatants themselves. Will you help us to make the grace of a retreat available to as many people as possible?

We are looking for faithful souls who have benefitted from our retreats, who know their *true* value, who will commit to a small monthly donation to help us make the Spiritual Exercises available to as many souls as possible. Will you help spread these treasures through a monthly donation or a sacrificial one time gift?

The attached reply card lists several options to support the work of St. Ignatius Retreat House. You may also donate online at www.sspxfordfield.com.

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